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ABSTRACT

Targeted to secondary school students, this booklet discusses sexual harassment. The booklet opens with a vignette about a teenage girl who is harassed by a fellow student and several shorter vignettes describing various types of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined, and nine forms of harassment are listed. The right to a life and an education free from sexual harassment is discused. Methods of dealing with the harassment are discussed, focusing on available choices and questions to ask oneself when deciding what to do. Five vignettes of students with sexual harassment problems are presented for students to suggest appropriate responses. Recommendations for helping victims of harassment are presented. For bystanders, it is recommended that they say they do not think harassment is funny, tell the offender to stop, and walk away. For friends, it is recommended that they be supportive and help the friend document the harassment incidents. For schools, it is recommended that they have policies against sexual harassment and appoint someone to counsel students with harassment problems. The earlier vignette about the high school girl who is being harassed is continued with the girl's response. The booklet concludes with a checklist for students to determine if a school is prepared to handle sexual harassment problems. (ABL)

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A Guide for • Teenagers • about • TURNING OFF • Sexual • Harassment

Some people think sexual harassment is just a fact of life. They think that nothing can be done about it, so it's best not to talk about it too much.

We think sexual harassment is serious. It happens to a lot of people and causes a lot of pain.

Fortunately, we also think that people can do something to stop it.

There are no easy answers to sexual harassment. But there are some good strategies that help people find good answers.

If someone's hassling you, or a friend of yours, or if someone thinks that you are hassling them, this book is for you. Read it. Talk about it with a friend. You may even want to talk about it in a class or with your student government.

We think this is a good book. We hope that you think so, too.

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Michelle's Journal

Sunday, May 13

Went to the mall yesterday with Kristen and Dolores. Had a great time. We went to all the good stores. Some of the new outfits are really crazy. I saw a pair of earrings that I wanted to buy, but I didn't have the money. Kristen liked them on me, too, but she didn't have any money either. Maybe I'll buy them next weekend. Well, I better start studying. Big test tomorrow. I better do o.k. or Dad will really be mad. Mom says I should study more. She's probably right.

Monday, May 14

Today was really weird. Before math class Ken and James were whistling at me in the hall. At first, I thought it was kind of neat. Then they wouldn't stop. I tried to ignore them and go to class, but they pinned me against the door and wouldn't let me in. I told them to get out of my way, but they just kept laughing and leaning against me. I felt real strange, kind of scared and mad at the same time. Everybody was laughing when I finally got into the room. After class I saw Dolores. I really exploded then. She thought it was awful, too. Oh well, it's no big deal, I guess. I'm not the only girl to get hassled like that by the guys. I guess I'll survive.

Tuesday, May 15

What a jerk! What a total jerk! Today, in Mr. Jacobs' class Ken started hassling me again. He kept winking at me and sending me notes. I was so embarrassed by what they said. Gross! I tried to ignore him, but he just kept passing them to me. Some of the kids were giggling because they knew what was going on. I was so distracted that I didn't hear Mr. Jacobs call on me to answer a question. Mr. Jacobs was kind of mad. He told me that if I paid more attention to him and less to Ken, I'd do better in math. Everybody looked at me. I felt so dumb. But I didn't know what to say.

Wednesday, May 16

I talked to Dolores about Ken. She said that I should just tell him to take a hike. So I waited for him after school. He was with a bunch of his friends. When I told him I wanted to talk to him alone, he said, "She just can't stand sharing me, guys." They all

laughed. Well, I really told him off. I didn't care who was listening. They all thought it was a great joke, and Ken just kept saying, "Don't be so uptight, baby." I felt so helpless. It was like talking to a brick wall. More like a brick brain . . . Back again. The phone just rang and Dad said that some boy wanted to talk to me. But when I picked it up nobody was there. I'll bet it was Ken. Why should I let him get to me? Maybe I am just making a big thing out of nothing.

Thursday, May 17

Got another phone call tonight. Mom answered it this time. She said it was a boy. Nobody was there though when I went to answer it. This is so weird! I know it's Ken. Maybe if I ignore him he'll get bored and stop. That's what Mom said. She said that this kind of stuff happens all the time. She said that a guy had really bothered her when she was a senior. She was glad when the year was over. "I know it's not fair," she said, "but don't let it interfere with your studies. He'll stop sooner or later." She's probably right.

Friday, May 18

I can't believe this is happening to me. This is crazy. What did I do anyway? Ken told his buddies that we went out to the drive-in together last night, and now everybody is talking about the two of us. I don't know what else he said, but I can sure guess. Can you believe it, Kristen even came up to me and said, "Heard you had a hot date last night, Michelle!" As if that wasn't bad enough, some of the guys have been driving by the house, honking the horn and yelling my name. Dad and Mom are really mad about it. I don't know what to tell them. I'm sure it's Ken's car. I have to do something to make him stop. But what?

Saturday, May 19

Dolores called today and asked me to go to the mall with her and Kristen. She said that we could buy the earrings that I saw last weekend. I think she thought that it would cheer me up, get my mind off Ken and what's happening at school. I really didn't want to go though. I was afraid that Ken or some of his friends might be there. I feel like a real jerk. A total jerk! I don't even want to go to school on Monday. But I know Mom will make me. Maybe I'll get sick. I really don't feel so well anyway. . . . The phone has been ringing today, but I've been afraid to answer it. I'm sure it's Ken. I wish I knew what to do.

What is Happening to Michelle?

Michelle has a problem. She feels picked on, confused and afraid. She feels like a "total jerk," to use her own words. But why? Let's look more closely at what Michelle wrote in her journal.

> Ken and some of his friends made sexual remarks to Michelle and pressed her against a classroom door. They kept her from doing what she wanted to do. They embarrassed her, maybe even humiliated her.
>
> Ken is also making strange phone calls to Michelle. She is worried about what he will do next. He is scaring Michelle and making her feel unsafe.
>
> Ken's behavior got Michelle in trouble with one of her teachers. Ken is interfering with her school work.
>
> Ken lied about Michelle. Now some of her friends at school are thinking about her differently. Ken has damaged her friendships and her reputation.
>
> Ken and his friends keep driving by Michelle's house, honking the horn and yelling her name. Her parents are angry and Michelle feels responsible. She is beginning to blame herself for Ken's behavior.

Michelle has told Ken to stop. She has told him how his behavior makes her feel. But to Ken it all seems like a big joke. It is no joke though to Michelle.

Ken's behavior is hurting Michelle in a lot of different ways.

Michelle has a problem, a serious problem. She is being sexually harassed.

What's Happened to Other Students?

Actually, what is happening to Michelle is not all that unusual. A lot of students, both boys and girls, say that similar things have happened to them. Here are some real examples of how students say that they have been sexually harassed. They may sound like something that has happened to you or someone you know.

"It's kind of different for a guy. But last year some older girls teased me about meeting them after school. They said that [illegible] me some 'private lessons.' Well [illegible] were just teasing, but this on[illegible] me, 'What's wrong, aren't yo[illegible] yet?' It really burned me. I [illegible] show them."

"Everyone knows that there is this one teacher in school who is always leaning over the girls, trying to look down [illegible]louses. He thinks that [illegible]gcho. Like all the [illegible] just dying for his [illegible]'You feel real [illegible]n his class."

"I was the only girl in aut[illegible] this one guy really gave [illegible] time, making remarks [illegible] gross suggestions. H[illegible] all kinds of sick thi[illegible]know, then he'd just laug[illegible]told the teacher he was b[illegible]. But I said that I better get used to it if I want to be a mechanic."

[illegible] makes me uncomfortable. He [illegible] at me all the time, and he's always asking me to do little favors for him. Sometimes he asks me to stay after class to talk. It bothers me. Mostly, I try not to look at [illegible] and hope that he won't talk to me."

"In the hall between classes we have to hold our books tight in front of us. That's because some of the guys try to brush up against us, feel us. It doesn't matter if you get mad at them. They just act innocent. But they know what they are doing."

"There is a place outside of the school by the steps. When girls go by there, the guys say a lot of things, you know, gross things, and really look you over. You have to go way out of your way to avoid them."

"I have a school placement in a department store where I do window displays. The manager has been real nice to me. At first I thought he really liked my work. It turned out though that it wasn't just my work that he liked. One day when we were alone he asked me to do some things to him. I was really scared. I didn't do anything, but I'm afraid he might ask me again.

What is Sexual Harassment?

What is sexual harassment anyway? Remember Michelle's story. She first thought that it was kind of neat that Ken and James were whistling at her. But when they didn't stop, she began to feel strange. It no longer made her feel good. No matter what she did or said, they continued. It began to affect her life in ways she didn't like, yet she couldn't do anything to make them stop.

The same thing occurs in each of the student's stories. In each story, a student feels angry and trapped by someone else's behavior. The student can't "turn off" someone's sexual demands, at least not without the risk of getting hurt in some way. As a result each feels threatened and afraid of what will happen next.

Sexual harassment often involves feelings of helplessness. You can feel unable to stop someone from hurting you. You can feel like you're singled out for no reason. And sexual harassment can be very frightening to a teenager when it is an adult who does the harassing.

Sexual harassment can take many forms. It can be . . .

- touching or grabbing.
- comments about your body.
- sexual remarks or suggestions.
- conversations that are too personal.
- pornographic pictures or stories.
- dirty jokes.
- obscene gestures.
- offensive displays of sex related objects.
- staring in a way that seems too personal.

Sexual harassment is unwanted and unwelcome sexual behavior which interferes with your life. No one has the right to harass another person. If you think that you are being harassed, you have a right to do something about it.

You have a RIGHT to a life free from sexual harassment.

•

You also have a legal RIGHT to an education free from sexual harassment.

What's the Big Deal?

What's the big deal anyway? Ken and his friends didn't sexually assault Michelle. There is a difference between sexual assault and harassment, isn't there?

Sexual assault is different from harassment. For one thing assault is more physical and violent than harassment. But they are also similar in some ways, and that is what makes sexual harassment a big deal.

BOTH sexual assault and harassment are ways that people . . .

force sexual attention on someone who doesn't want it.

dominate others by **unfairly** taking advantage of a situation.

intimidate others to **force** their consent.

take pleasure from someone else's **pain** or discomfort.

abuse power that they have over people.

violate someone's rights.

Power is a big part of assault and harassment. That is why people who are assaulted or harassed say that they feel weak, helpless and humiliated. Assault does "go farther" than harassment, but both hurt people and make them feel badly. That's what makes harassment a big deal.

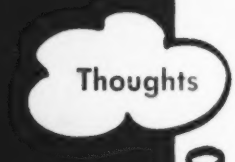
How Do I Know If I'm Being Harassed?

Students and adults say that they are sometimes unsure about whether they are being sexually harassed. Sometimes they say it is difficult to tell the difference between sexual harassment and flirting or teasing.

There is a difference, though. Harassment feels bad. Flirting feels good. Harassment is unwanted. It makes people feel trapped and helpless, frustrated, confused, resentful and angry. If you think that you are being harassed, your own thoughts and feelings are usually pretty good signals about what is happening to you.

Warning Signals —

These thoughts and feelings are warning signals of sexual harassment. They can alert you to the possibility that you are being sexually harassed.



I can't believe this is happening to me.

Why me? What did I do?

I wish I could make it stop.

I hate you for doing this.

If I say anything, everyone will think I'm crazy.

Just leave me alone.

What's going to happen next?

I wish I could get away.

Why doesn't anyone help me?

Feelings

Confused

Guilty

Helpless

Angry

Frightened

Hopeless

Scared

Alone

W

Ken may be thinking about a lot of things right now. He may even be confused by Michelle's anger and his own feelings. He may not be trying to put her down. He may have something else in mind.

Ken may be trying to attract Michelle. He may wonder why she's avoiding him. He may not understand how he's turning her off.

Ken may think that it's funny. He may be confused by how angry and mad she is at him. He may not realize how badly he is hurting her.

Ken may think that he's being real "bad." He may be surprised that some students disapprove of what he's doing. He may not know how bad he really looks.

Ken may feel trapped by his own behavior. He may be embarrassed by Michelle's anger. He may not know how to stop without looking foolish.

Ken may be angry. He may think that Michelle is putting him down. He may not understand that he has only himself to blame for how he feels.

It's not easy to admit that you've hurt someone, even if you didn't mean to do it. But things only get worse when you don't. The best thing to do if you are harassing someone is always . . . STOP!

Could you be harassing someone?

What Can Michelle Do?

Now that you have a pretty good idea about what sexual harassment is, what can people do about it? Some people believe that nothing can be done. That's what Michelle thought. But Michelle did several things that actually do stop harassment in many situations. Remember the story?

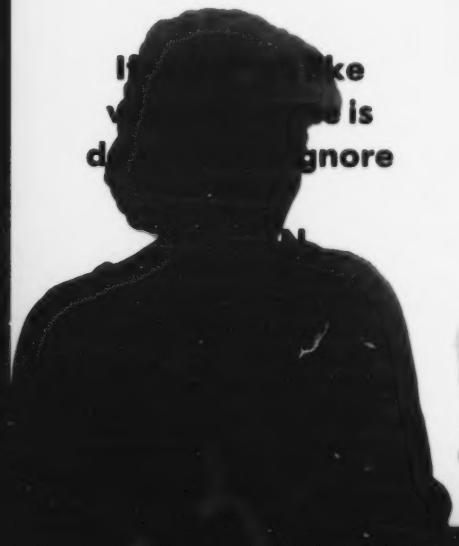
Michelle thought about Ken's behavior and how it made her feel.

She talked it over with her friend Dolores and her mother.

She decided that she didn't like it.

She told Ken to stop.

Sounds simple? It is. But it may be harder to do than you think. People who are being harassed are often afraid to say "Stop!" They are afraid that it is their fault. They are afraid to mention it to someone else because they feel ashamed. They fear others will laugh at them or think that they are complaining about nothing.



Other Choices

"I'd go talk to [illegible] counselor or teacher. They'd help me figure out what to do next."

"In the classroom, when Ken was passing notes, I'd have taken my books and gone to the principal's office. I wouldn't have put up with it."

"If Ken wouldn't stop, I'd get out of the classes that I had to take with him, and I'd avoid seeing him in the halls. What else can you do if someone won't leave you alone? I'd be afraid of what he would do next."

Deciding What To Do

Am I acting like it is my fault?

Am I only hurting myself?

Am I acting as if I have no rights?

Are there other things that I can do that make more sense?

If your answers don't sound right to you, or if you are unsure about them, think again about your decision. Talk it over with a friend or trusted adult. Do something to help yourself. TUNE IN to your rights.

When You Should Talk to Someone Else

If they try to make you promise to keep the harassment a secret.

●

If the harasser is an adult.

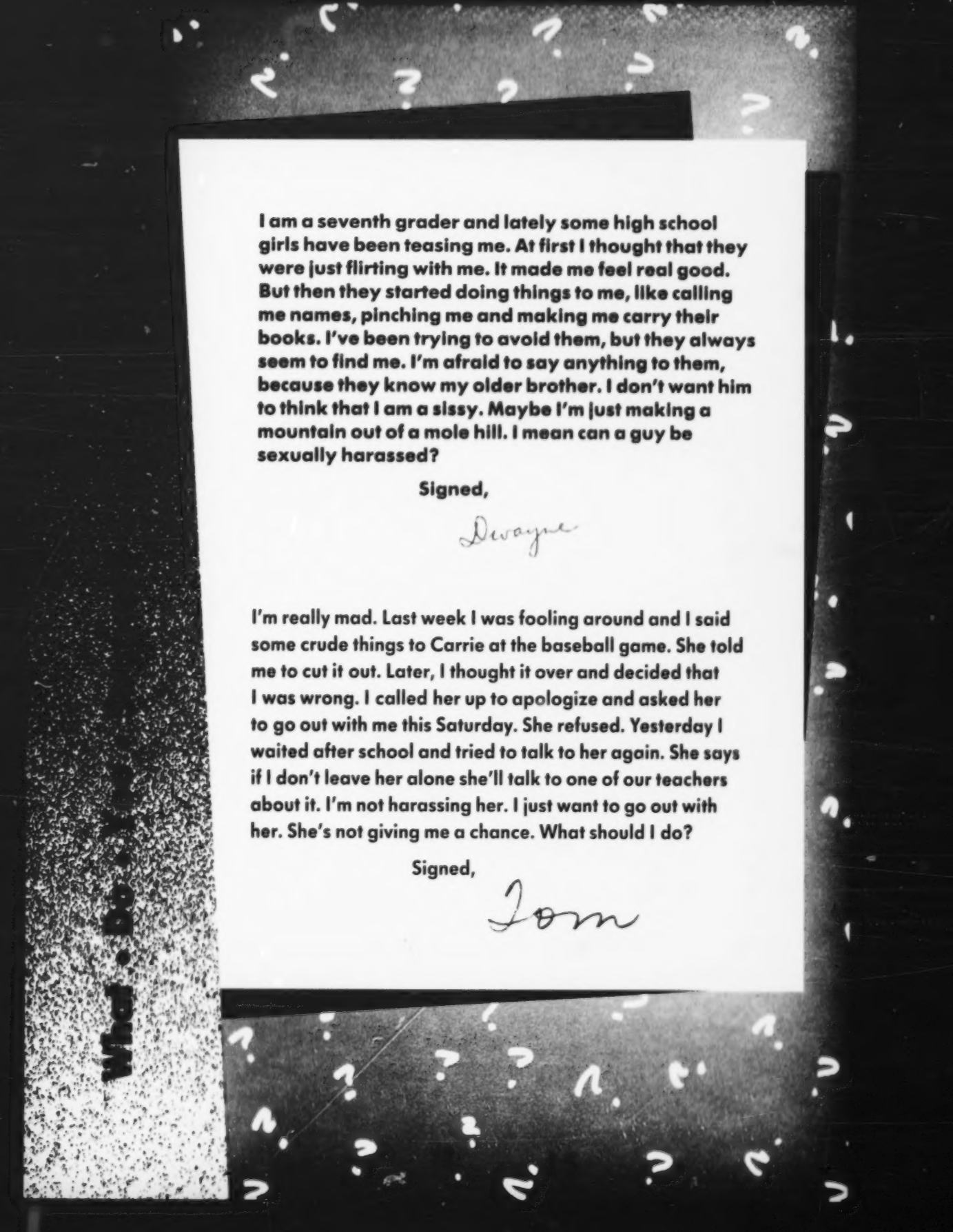
●

If the harassment happens only when you are alone with that person.

●

If you are being physically threatened or hurt.

Talk to a trusted adult.



I am a seventh grader and lately some high school girls have been teasing me. At first I thought that they were just flirting with me. It made me feel real good. But then they started doing things to me, like calling me names, pinching me and making me carry their books. I've been trying to avoid them, but they always seem to find me. I'm afraid to say anything to them, because they know my older brother. I don't want him to think that I am a sissy. Maybe I'm just making a mountain out of a mole hill. I mean can a guy be sexually harassed?

Signed,

Dwayne

I'm really mad. Last week I was fooling around and I said some crude things to Carrie at the baseball game. She told me to cut it out. Later, I thought it over and decided that I was wrong. I called her up to apologize and asked her to go out with me this Saturday. She refused. Yesterday I waited after school and tried to talk to her again. She says if I don't leave her alone she'll talk to one of our teachers about it. I'm not harassing her. I just want to go out with her. She's not giving me a chance. What should I do?

Signed,

Tom

I'm the only girl in shop class. Some of the boys play "practical jokes" on me, like pouring grease in my tool box, stealing tools I need, hiding things from me. It really bugs me. I told them to stop, but they just laughed. Even the teacher thinks that it's funny. I don't. They don't do these things to anyone else. Am I being sexually harassed? What can I do?

Signed, Janelle

Toni, my best friend, has had trouble with the manager where she works. She keeps trying to avoid him, but he always seems to catch her when she's alone. Sometimes he follows her into the stockroom and puts his arms around her. One time he even tried to kiss her. He says she reminds him of his daughter. She's upset because she doesn't like it, but she really needs the job. I feel helpless when Toni talks about it. I'd like to tell her what to do, but I really don't know what to say.

Signed, Anna

I have been babysitting in my neighborhood for a long time. Lately, the father of one family has been driving me home. He says he wants to be sure I'm "safe and sound," but he always has a reason why he can't take me straight home. Sometimes he'll go to the store or downtown — even when I say I have to get right home. Last time, he held my knee and talked about how much I meant to him. I moved away from him and asked him to take me straight home. As I got out of the car, he said, "Ellie, let's just keep this between ourselves, all right?" He is a friend of my parents. What can I do? I feel awful.

Signed, Ellie

How You Can Help

As a Bystander

What should you do if you see someone being harassed? Some people feel like they can't do anything, like they are a captive audience. There are, however, some things that you can do to help. You can . . .

say that you don't think it's funny.

tell the person to stop.

walk away.

Don't do or say anything that will encourage the harasser. Don't giggle, stare at the person being harassed, add more jokes or gossip about what happened. These actions will probably make the situation worse, because they make people feel like you approve of their behavior.

As a Friend

Friends can be very helpful. Sometimes they can do more than anyone else. A friend can help someone figure out what is happening and what to do about it.

If you are a friend of someone being harassed, be a good listener. Don't act on your own, without the person's permission. That might make your friend feel even more helpless. Help your friend decide what to do and then be supportive.

If your friend decides to discuss matters with an adult at school, help your friend prepare what to say. Talk it over. Make a list of what happened.

Write down . . .

what happened.

when and where it occurred.

who saw it.

how it made your friend feel.

how your friend tried to stop it.

Provide plenty of detail.

Offer to go along to the complaint manager. Your friend may be scared and really need your support. Be reassuring. But let your friend do the talking. Be supportive.

What Your School Can Do

Your school may have a [illegible] be written in your Student Handbook in the part about student rights and responsibilities. Your school may also have a complaint manager. It may be the principal, or a counselor, or a teacher almost everyone knows.

Ask your school's complaint manager or a trusted teacher about how your school helps prevent sexual harassment and h[illegible]

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Michelle's Journal

Monday, June 4
Dolores and I had a long talk about Ken and how he's been bothering me. She said that I had to do something, because Ken just wasn't getting the message to leave me alone. We decided that I should talk to Ms. Greene, our Social Studies teacher, and see what she said. She likes to talk to students. Dolores promised to go with me. I'm kind of scared, but I'm really mad at Ken, too.

Tuesday, June 5
Ms. Greene was really nice. She said that my problem wasn't all that unusual and that many people find themselves in this situation. She said I really should talk to the school's complaint manager, Mr. Jefferson. She said I have a right to get an education without being harassed. That made me feel a lot better, like I wasn't all alone and that I could really do something about it. I'm scared of talking to Mr. Jefferson, though. I've only seen him once in a while in the hall. I don't like the idea of talking about this to a stranger.

Wednesday, June 6
Today, I saw Mr. Jefferson. Dolores and Ms. Greene came along. Ms. Greene started off by talking to Mr. Jefferson. They just seemed to chit-chat. Mr. Jefferson remembered when I had my picture in the paper back in eighth grade! He seemed really friendly. Then he asked me about what happened. He asked me a lot of questions. I was nervous at first, but he seemed really concerned. He said there were a lot of ways he could help me handle the situation. He felt the best way would be if I wrote a letter to Ken telling him what I didn't like, and what I wanted Ken to do. Mr. Jefferson said that he would help me write the letter, but that first I had to make a list of things that Ken had done. I told him that I would, and he suggested that we meet again next Monday. He also promised he'd be there when Ken read the letter.

Monday, June 11
Dolores and I worked on the list of things for Mr. Jefferson over the weekend. I told Mom and Dad about it, and they thought that it was a good idea. They let Dolores stay overnight, so we could work on it together. Mr. Jefferson and I went over it today. Here's what I wrote:

Dear Ken:

I am writing this letter to tell you that I want you to stop bothering me. This is how you are bothering me:

(1) Monday, May 14th you and James whistled at me and kept me from going to class. You made rude comments about me.

(2) Tuesday, May 15th you passed gross notes to me in Mr. Jacobs' class. You distracted me and I got into trouble because I didn't hear him ask me a question.

(3) Wednesday, May 16th I told you to stop picking on me. You ignored what I said, and made fun of me in front of your friends. That night I started getting strange phone calls from someone. I think that they were from you.

(4) Friday, May 18th you lied about me and told your friends that we went out together when we didn't. You said that I was a "hot date." That night you and your friends began driving by my house honking the horn and yelling my name. I think you are trying to ruin my reputation.

Writing this down makes me angry. You are hurting me, and I want you to stop. I want you to: (1) stop whistling and staring at me: (2) stop calling me rude names: (3) stop acting like I want to see you outside of class: (4) stop telling lies about me: (5) stop calling me on the phone: (6) stop driving by my house: (7) leave me alone.

Michelle

Tuesday, June 12
I met with Ken and Mr. Jefferson this morning. I handed Ken my letter and he read it very slowly. He looked at it for a long time. He seemed to be upset and kind of embarrassed by it. I was really nervous, but I was glad that I had written it. Mr. Jefferson said, "Do you understand the problem, Ken? Will you do what Michelle asks?" Ken said that he didn't think that it was that big a deal. Mr. Jefferson told him that if he were me, he might see it differently. I told Ken that I just wanted to be able to go to class and do my work without being harassed by him.

Wednesday, June 13
So far, so good. Ken and his friends didn't hassle me today. I think he's pretty mad at me, but I don't care. At least he's not making remarks and spreading lies. It makes me feel good to know that I can stand up for my rights. I think some of the other kids feel I did the right thing, too. Dolores does.

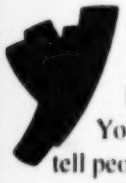
Thursday, June 14
By tomorrow I should have all my exams done. Hurray! The math study group worked out pretty well. The social studies test was not as hard as I thought. Ken never looks at me and that suits me fine. We may never be friends, but so what. I don't need a friend like that. I'm glad that's over. I'm looking forward to next year.

Is your school prepared to handle sexual harassment problems?

	Yes	No
Do you know and understand your school's sexual harassment policy?		
Have you been given any written guidelines that explain how to report sexual harassment?		
Are your school's guidelines clear and easy to follow?		
Have your parents been told how to help you make a complaint?		
Do you know a person at your school you feel comfortable talking to about sexual harassment?		
Have you been to a workshop on sexual harassment?		
Has sexual harassment been discussed in any of your classes?		

If you have answered no to most of these questions, your school needs to do more to help students solve the problem of sexual harassment. Talk to your student council or to teachers and guidance counselors about making changes that will help stop sexual harassment.

Things turned out ok for Michelle. Ken and his friends stopped harassing her. She even learned something good about herself — she learned that she has rights that she can protect.



ou can do something about sexual harassment. It doesn't have to be a fact of life. You can talk about it with your friends. You can tell people how their behavior makes you feel, and you can be aware of your own behavior, especially the possibility that you may be hurting someone else.

Your school can also do something about sexual harassment. It can clearly state that sexual harassment is wrong, whether it is done by a student or adult. It can provide support, too, like Michelle's school did, for those students who feel like they are being harassed.

Michelle got TUNED IN to **her** rights, and by doing so she turned off sexual harassment. We hope that this book has helped you and other students TUNE IN to **your** rights about sexual harassment, too.

TURN OFF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Tune in to your rights!

In our school the complaint manager is

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